

Mr. N. B. KINNEAR exhibited, on behalf of Mr. G. L. Bates and himself, a new Woodpecker from Arabia, and made the following remarks :—

Some time ago Mr. H. St. J. Philby sent a young Woodpecker from Arabia, which appeared to belong to an undescribed form. Recently several adult specimens have arrived at the Museum, and, after a careful comparison with the Woodpeckers of the Palearctic and Ethiopian regions, we have come to the conclusion that it agrees with no described genus, but appears to be intermediate between *Dryobates*, *Mesopicos*, and *Dendropicos*. We therefore propose to describe it as

### DESERTIPICUS, gen. nov.

A medium-sized Woodpecker with wing-markings as in *Dryobates*, but differing from that genus in the absence of the characteristic malar stripe and white on scapulars and back. In the uniform colour of the back this genus resembles some species of *Mesopicos*, but differs in the absence of the green or yellow in the plumage and the colour of the spots on the wing being pure white, not tinged with yellow or green. From *Dendropicos* the new genus is distinguished by the comparative longer tail and bill, as compared with the wing.

Type of genus, *Desertipicus doræ* Bates & Kinnear.

### *Desertipicus doræ*, sp. nov.

*Description*.—♂. Forehead, hind neck, back, and rump earthy-brown; upper tail-coverts blackish-brown; a crimson patch on the back of the head; wings blackish-brown with white spots on both webs, those on the outer reaching the shaft, while those on the inner web, as a rule, are separated from the shaft by 1–6 mm. of black. Throat very pale earthy-brown; breast slightly paler than back; belly, thighs, and under tail-coverts greyish-brown, faintly barred with whitish; middle of the belly tinged with crimson.

♀.—Similar to ♂, but lacking the crimson on the head, which is entirely brown, and of a slightly paler shade than the back.

*Measurements*.—2 ♂♂: wing 113–115, tail 65–66, tarsus 19–20, fourth toe without claw 16–17, bill 24–25 mm.

4 ♀♀: wing 108–112, tail 60–64, tarsus 19, fourth toe without claw 15–16, bill 20–22.

*Distribution.*—From the valleys of the Taif area (east of Mecca), at elevations from 4000–6000 ft., wherever there are any Acacia trees.

*Type.*—♂, January 14, 1935, Ukadh (Taif-Mecca Road), 5000 ft. Collected by H. St. J. Philby.

*Remarks.*—Specimens examined: two males, four females, and a young bird. Named in honour of Mrs. Dora Philby, wife of Mr. H. St. J. Philby.

Colonel MEINERTZHAGEN exhibited a large series of down taken off various British Duck and from their nests. In almost every case the down taken from the bird was distinctly paler than the down taken from the nest, though in some cases the down was taken from the bird during the month when eggs should be in the nest.

This difference in colour cannot be accounted for by bleaching, and as yet no satisfactory explanation can be offered, but it seems that there may be some especial down grown for a short period during the nesting season for the special purpose of covering the eggs, or that there is some chemical change on the pigment of the down, brought about by the brooding of the Duck.

In any case, the present series of down, and the dried specimens of breeding Duck available in this country, are quite inadequate to decide the question. What we require is a close examination of some wild species of Duck in captivity for a period before and leading up to incubation, to see if the body-down changes during the incubation period, together with specimens of down taken from the same bird's nest. All specimens of down should be kept in light-proof boxes, as they are very liable to bleaching.

Since writing the above, Mr. Witherby has kindly pointed out to me two papers in 'British Birds' (ix. p. 34, and xii. p. 98) where my late wife not only studied but solved the very question which has been puzzling me. If reference is made to these papers, it will be seen that moult, and moult